

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MOSCOW 05158 151818Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AGRE-00 EB-08 COME-00 CIAE-00
INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02 /038 W
-----160637Z 094082 /15

R 151559Z APR 77
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6319
INFO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT UR
SUBJECT: FOOD SUPPLIES IN MINSK AND MOLODECHNO, APRIL 14

SUMMARY: MEAT AND SAUSAGE WERE IN SHORT SUPPLY IN THE BELORUSSIAN CITIES OF MINSK AND MOLODECHNO APRIL 14 WHEN EMBASSY OFFICERS VISITED, BUT OTHER SUPPLIES APPEARED TO BE ADEQUATE. END SUMMARY

1. MINSK'S LARGE KOMAROVSKIY MARKET WAS SURVEYED AT 0900. LIMITED SUPPLIES OF PORK WERE AVAILABLE, AT R3.50/KILO. PORK FAT SOLD FOR R3, PORK SCRAPING FOR 50 KOPECKS/KILO. WHILE CROWDS WERE NOT LARGE, THE SUPPLY WAS CLEARLY INADEQUATE. ONE WOMAN SEEKING TO BUY SOME PORK WAS TOLD IT HAD BEEN ALREADY SOLD TO SOMEONE ELSE "WHO HAD WAITED THREE HOURS" FOR IT. NO SAUSAGE OR OTHER MEAT IN THE MARKET. ONE FOOD STORE DOWNTOWN HAD SOME SAUSAGE, BUT A LARGER STORE ON VICTORY SQUARE, SURVEYED AT 1430, HAD NO MEAT AT ALL. ONLY SMALL, FROZEN FISH WERE AVAILABLE, AT PRICES FROM R1.20 TO 50 K. PER KILO. AT THE CENTRAL FOOD STORE IN MOLODECHNO AT 1800, THE SAME ASSORTMENT OF FISH WAS FOR SALE, BUT NO MEAT.

2. AN ELDERLY MAN ON THE TRAIN TO MOLODECHNO TOLD US LAST WINTER (1975-76) THE MEAT SITUATION HAD BEEN SO BAD THAT

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DRIED FISH GOOD FOR SOUP (AS MEAT SUBSTITUTE) HAD SOLD IN MINSK FOR AS MUCH AS R45 PER KILO. THIS YEAR, HE SAID, A SEVERE EARLY AUTUMN FROST HAD SEVERELY HURT THE POTATO, CARROT AND APPLE CROPS. OUR SURVEY CONFIRMED HIS OBSERVATION: ALTHOUGH SOME PEOPLE HAD FOUND DECENT- LOOKING POTATOES SOMEWHERE, MINSK'S MARKET HAD ONLY OLD ONE FOR 25 K/KILO (AND NO TAKERS), AND THE FOOD

STORES NONE. LIMITED SUPPLIES OF CARROTS SOLD AT THE MARKET FOR 80 K/KILO; WORMY, SOFT APPLES RANGED IN PRICE FROM 75 K/KILO TO R2. LEMONS (.50 APIECE) AND LETTUE (R1/KILO) WERE AVAILABLE IN GOOD SUPPLY AT THE MARKET. BUTTER IN MINSK SOLD FOR R 3.40/KILO, BUT OUR ACQUAINTANCE ON THE TRAIN SAID IN MANY VILLAGES "YOU CAN'T EVEN BUY MARGARINE." EGGS SOLD FOR 95K FOR TEN, CABBAGE R2/KILO, ONIONS FROM 50 K TO R4/KILO, DEPENDING ON SIZE AND AGE.

3. THE CENTRAL FOOD STORE IN MOLODECHNO (50 KM NW FROM MINSK) APPEARED TO HAVE ABOUT THE SAME SELECTION AND QUANTITY OF FOOD --BOTH FRESH AND CANNED--AS THE FOOD STORES IN MINSK, BUT WE SAW NO INDICATION FRESH MEAT WAS FOR SALE. MINSK RESTAURANTS ALL HAD WHITE BREAD AS WELL AS DARK; IN MOLODECHNO THE MAIN RESTURANT HAD ONLY BEIGE AND DARK.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: SUPPLIES, FOODS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 15-Apr-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977MOSCOW05158
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770132-0920
Format: TEL
From: MOSCOW
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770453/aaaabtot.tel
Line Count: 80
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 0ae998a4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 11-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2794816
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FOOD SUPPLIES IN MINSK AND MOLODECHNO, APRIL 14 SUMMARY: MEAT AND SAUSAGE WERE IN SHORT SUPPLY IN THE BELORUSSIAN CITIES OF MINSK AND MOLODECHNO APR IL 1
TAGS: PINT, UR
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/0ae998a4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009